NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Office of Communications

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20506-0001
202/682-5570
202/682-5611 FAX
http://arts.endow.gov

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Cherie Simon
202-682-5570

NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWS TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS HONOR IN FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS

Washington, D.C. -- Today, the **National Endowment for the Arts** announced the recipients of the **1998 National Heritage Fellowships,** the country's most prestigious honor in the **folk and traditional arts**. Eleven fellowships, which include a one-time award of $10,000 each, will be shared among 15 master artists in 11 different states. Among those chosen are a jazz fiddler from Kansas City, a Native American silversmith from Oklahoma, a trio of Jewish Klezmer musicians living in Florida, and a master boat builder from Tennessee. These performers and craftspeople, who together represent a rich cross-section of America's many cultures, are honored for their achievements as artists, teachers, innovators, and keepers of traditional art forms. They join the ranks of previous National Heritage Fellows who include bluesman B.B. King, Irish stepdancer Michael Flatley, cowboy poet Wally McRae, and acclaimed musicians Bessie Jones, Doc Watson, and Bill Monroe. Since 1982, the Endowment has awarded over 211 National Heritage Fellowships. An awards ceremony and concert featuring the honorees will be held this fall in Washington, D.C. Target Stores is the corporate sponsor of the 1998 National Heritage Fellowship events.

Bill Ivey, new Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts and a folklorist, said, "The National Heritage Fellows embody the spirit of America's living cultural heritage. Through their masterful music and craftsmanship, and as members of families and communities, these artists preserve and revive the traditions that define us as a people and as a nation."

1998 NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS:

- **APSARA DANCERS : MS. MOLY SAM, MS. SAM-OEUN TES, & MR. SAM-ANG SAM:** Cambodian traditional dancers and musician -- Reston, Virginia & Fort Washington, Maryland;
- **EDDIE BLAZONCZYK**: Polish-American musician/bandleader -- Bridgeview, Illinois;
- **DALE CALHOUN**: Anglo-American boat builder -- Tiptonville, Tennessee;
- **BRUCE CAESAR**: Sac and Fox-Pawnee German silversmith -- Anadarko, Oklahoma;
- **ANTONIO "TONY" DE LA ROSA**: *Tejano conjunto* accordionist -- Riviera, Texas;
- **EPSTEIN BROTHERS: MAX, WILLIAM "WILLIE" & JULIUS "JULIE":** Jewish klezmer musicians -- Tamarac, Florida;
- **SOPHIA "SOPHIE" GEORGE**: Yakama-Colville beadworker -- Gresham, Oregon;
- **NADJESCHDA OVERGAARD:** Danish-American Hardanger needleworker --Kimballton, Iowa;
- **HARILAOS PAPAPOSTOLOU:** Greek Byzantine chanter -- Potomac, Maryland;
- **CLAUDE "THE FIDDLER" WILLIAMS:** African-American jazz/swing fiddler -- Kansas City, Missouri;
- **ROEBUCK "POPS" STAPLES**: African-American Gospel/Blues musician -- Dolton, Illinois.

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NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1998, BIOGRAPHIES

APSARA DANCERS: MS. MOLY SAM [Moh-LEE Sahm], Ms. **SAM-OEUN TES,** [Sahm-OON-Tess] & MR. **SAM-ANG SAM,** [Sahm-AHNG-Sam] -- **Cambodian traditional dancers and musician, of Reston, Virginia & Fort Washington, Maryland** -- are a rigorously trained trio considered the top ensemble outside Cambodia still performing and preserving the highly stylized dance drama central to Cambodian national identity.

EDDIE BLAZONCZYK [Bluh-ZAHN-chick] -- **Polish-American musician/bandleader of Bridgeview, Illinois** -- forged the Chicago-style Polish-American polka which defines "polka" for millions of Americans.

DALE CALHOUN -- Anglo-American boat builder of Tiptonville, Tennessee -- is a fourth-generation master boat builder acclaimed as the last craftsman of the unique Reelfoot Lake stumpjumper, a boat specially designed to slide over cypress knees and logs.

BRUCE CAESAR -- Sac and Fox-Pawnee German silversmith of Anadarko, Oklahoma -- is an award-winning, third-generation metalsmith who balances a unique interpretation of Native American tradition with an adventurous outlook toward design.

ANTONIO "TONY" DE LA ROSA -- ***Tejano conjunto* accordionist of Riviera, Texas** – is the most prolific and influential accordionist of the new generation of *conjunto* (literally "combo") Mexican-American musicians. He was named to the Conjunto Music Hall of Fame and is a household *tejano* name.

EPSTEIN (EP-Steen) **BROTHERS: MAX, WILLIAM "WILLIE" & JULIUS "JULIE" -- Jewish klezmer musicians of Tamarac, Florida** – were acclaimed in the 1950 and 60s as "the kings of klezmer," and are now the grandfathers leading a tremendous renaissance of klezmer, a rollicking yet soulful instrumental music at the heart of many Jewish celebrations.

SOPHIA "SOPHIE" GEORGE -- Yakama-Colville beadworker of Gresham, Oregon -- is a model for the recent revival of Native American beadwork. Her work is found in many museums and is considered an invaluable cultural resource and treasure.

NADJESCHDA OVERGAARD (Nah-JESH-dah) -- **Danish-American Hardanger needleworker of Kimballton, Iowa** -- is the 20th-century fountainhead of artistry in this treasured Scandinavian embroidery tradition. Her skill and work in preserving the Danish heritage are widely recognized.

HARILAOS PAPAPOSTOLOU (Har-EE-lah-os Pah pah poh-SHTOH-loo) -- **Greek Byzantine chanter of Potomac, Maryland** -- has been "lead chanter" at St. Sophia's Cathedral in Washington, D.C. for more than three decades and is the driving force to keep the complex, medieval tradition of Byzantine chanting a living part of Greek-American cultural life.

ROEBUCK "POPS" STAPLES -- African-American Gospel/Blues musician of Dolton, Illinois -- founder of the famed Staples Singers, is a singer, guitarist, and composer from the Mississippi Delta who has moved into his prime with a Grammy-winning solo recording.

CLAUDE "THE FIDDLER" WILLIAMS -- African-American jazz and swing fiddler of Kansas City, Missouri -- has performed with Count Basie, Nat King Cole, and Jay McShann, and played at the White House. He is a member of both the Oklahoma Jazz and Music Halls of Fame.

-- Longer Bios. Are Available Upon Request --